VI.—ECONOMIC ROUMANIA

Agriculture.

311 162 Modern Roumania is essentially an agricultural state, as was the Old Kingdom (43 to 46 per cent of the land being arable and 22 per cent forest, whilst over 80 per cent of the population of 18 millions are agricultural workers), although it has valuable potentialities for the development of industry.

132 24 134 Arranged in zones round the bastion of the southern and eastern Carpathian highlands, the main agricultural regions of post-war Roumania exhibit, according to aspect and altitude, a considerable variety of climatic conditions, which is reflected in a varying emphasis in the selection of crops raised. In general, we may say that the continental nature of the climate and the resulting succession from north to south and from highland to lowland of soils, graded from poor ashen-grey podsol in the Carpathians through oak-forest loams to a rich chernoziom in the south-eastern Danube plains, has resulted, wherever the ground is sufficiently level, in a concentration on grain production. The heavier rainfall of the uplands, the relatively great humidity and shelter from the driving winds that sweep across the open plains, coupled with the exposure of less [137] fertile rocks—granites and coarse sandstones—explains the large area of forested land (24.5 per cent, nearly 7½ million hectares) in those districts that extend into the Carpathian highlands.

243 Of the 13 odd million hectares of arable land, cereals occupy some 87 to 89 per cent. Production varies greatly from year to year and from district to district. In the old kingdom of Wallachia-Moldavia, maize is by far the heaviest crop, particularly in Oltenia, where the summer rainfall is heavier. It is also the heaviest crop in Transylvania, the cultivated areas under maize, wheat, barley and oats being [262] respectively 4, 3, 2 and 1 million hectares. Maize is the staple crop of the peasant holder almost throughout the country, for it not only provides the bread cakes and the "mamaliga," maize pudding, the main food of the mass of the people, but also fodder for the cattle to eke out the hay in

423 dealt with a considerably larger area. Forty-six holdings were between one and two, 18 between two and three, 8 between three and four, 3 between four and five, and 2 larger (8.8 and 19.5) hectares in extent. These holdings do not necessarily represent the whole of the land owned by a peasant.

LAND UTILISATION.

311 BROADLY SPEAKING, the land within the commune may be divided into three categories: the alluvium of the Bistricioara valley and the lower portions of its tributary valleys which is devoted to arable farming; the deforested lower slopes of the valley sides, together with the broad upper portions of some of the tributary valleys and odd patches of level ground here and there which are reserved for hay; and the rest, which is forest with the exception of the small high-altitude clearings that provide summer pasturage for the transhumant flocks and herds.

311 ABOUT 58 per cent of the land belongs to the state, 37 per
423 cent to the commune, and the rest, comprising about 400 hectares, is owned by the peasants. These 400 hectares represent the arable land of the commune, whilst the state lands are entirely forest. The commune lands include a certain amount of forest, together with the hay meadows and summer pastures. The law tries to make peasants plant trees to replace those that they cut down.

CROPS.

241 IN the arable area the outstanding crop is maize, from which
● [262] "mamaliga," the staple food of the peasants, is made. It is sown at the beginning of May, two hillings, separated by an interval of three or four weeks, are made during June, and the crop is harvested between September 25th and October 10th. Potatoes, hemp, flax, lucerne (of which three cuttings are usually made), a little rye, sunflowers and vegetables are grown, mostly in very small patches, giving the impression of garden, rather than field, cultivation. Occasionally a small orchard adds further variety to the general pattern.

246 THE HAY CROP is of vital importance, as in all mountain communities of this kind throughout Europe. It is harvested

462 In the Carpathians, while some stâne are inhabited by
233 families of shepherds, others have men only, and purely "feminine" stâne are not unknown. There appear to be regional differences based perhaps on the varying requirements of the lowland crops, and all forms are said to be of some antiquity; it cannot be shown that the "masculine" stâne represent an older type than those where both sexes take part, or vice versa. But it is significant that in some parts there is a definite *tabu* against women, and the shepherds must have no relations with them in the prescribed season, from the arrival at the stână to July 20th (St. Eloi). In the areas we visited, while the shepherds were exclusively male, women from the villages occasionally ride up with messages or food, and may stay at the hut for a day or two.

On reaching the pastures, to resume, the sheep are divided into separate flocks—milkers and non-milkers, lambs and wethers. Only the milkers are kept in the immediate neighbourhood of the stână, the rest being driven uphill or to the shelter of the forest's edge, according to their requirements. Two milkings are usual, about 6 o'clock morning and evening. The sheep are driven into the *strunga*, a fenced enclosure near the hut, where the shepherd-boy introduces them one by one into a narrow roofed exit at which the milkers sit. The milk is forthwith poured into a copper cauldron over which the *baciu*[2] stands at the fireside, stirring the contents with the peeled, spiked top of a spruce. The copper pot is tinned inside, this work being done by the gipsies. Into the simmering milk the *baciu* throws a pinch of rennet, and then works the curds into a thick pulp. A simple press—a canvas bag twisted with a tourniquet and weighted with a stone—next comes into use, and after three days salt is added and the cheese is finally kneaded and stored in a sheepskin which has been specially prepared by drying and scraping. This is cheese of the first quality (brânză), a poorer quality (urdă) being obtained from the whey left in the copper after taking out the curds. The urdă is often stored in small skins, e.g. rabbit, or in containers made of bark or hollowed branches. Much of the cheese in these days is bought by co-operative societies.

● 262 It is the duty of the *baciu*,[2] further, to prepare food for the shepherds. Onions, beans and paprika make vegetable soup, and maize-bread and cheese complete a diet which may be varied now and again with smoked mutton. Another task

2 [For explanatory footnote see pp. 49, Ct. 116 - - Analyst]
2 [cheese maker of the Stâna -52- Analyst]

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565 ease of behaviour, a keen sense for music and popular art and a dogged belief in its capacity to achieve progress.

The life of the Rumanian peasant is simple and [262] hard. His main nourishment consists of *Mamaliga*, a dish prepared of maize-flour, similar to the Italian *Polenta*. This forms his staple diet; meat and other [272] luxuries are very rare indeed. The national drink is *Tuica* (brewed from plum juice). The Rumanian [291] men are dressed in white trousers and a long white tunic fastened by a belt, a short jacket, and a fur cap or hat. Footwear, if any, consists of simple leather sandals strapped to the legs, called *Opinci*, similar to those of the Greek and Yugoslav peasants. In the comparatively rich regions short boots are worn. Gay embroidery, whose colouring and pattern vary according to districts, adorns all garments, especially the women's shirts and headcloths, and the aprons [342] which they wear fore and aft. In contrast to their gay dress the houses of the Rumanian peasants are usually small, badly built cottages of sun-dried brick and straw, whitewashed and occasionally [346] decorated with woodwork. The churches too are built in a similar fashion except in the mountain districts where stone and wood are used.

795 **RELIGION.** Most Rumanians belong to the Orthodox Church, but many Transylvanian Rumanians are Uniates, that is, Catholics of the Byzantine Rite. They form a link between the Latin and Orthodox 659 Churches. The Rumanian Orthodox Church is strongly national. The Uniate Church was used in the past by the Hungarian rulers of Transylvania as a means of assimilating the Rumanians in the Hun-

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decline which during the Great War assumed very serious proportions. Within a short period the Old Kingdom lost more than half of its total livestock. These losses were only partly made good by the acquisition of the New Territories.

In 1921 Greater Rumania had about 1,700,000 horses of which more than half were in the New Territories. There are two main races, both much smaller and lighter and more short-lived than the heavy type of English cart-horse. The horse of the plains, similar to and often crossed with the Hungarian horse, is found in Muntenia and in the western provinces, the Russian horse in Bessarabia and in the Bukovina. The mountain horse is small and tough and is chiefly used for the carrying of loads.

Cattle breeding has been one of the weakest points of Rumanian agriculture for some time. Although Greater Rumania by the acquisition of territories from Hungary and Austria obtained some high-class cattle, there was on the whole a decline both in quality and in quantity.[1] The decline in quality is due to the widespread use of cows as draught-animals and to inbreeding. The import of good foreign stock has been on an insufficient scale to improve this position, although some regions in Transylvania and the Banat have been able to maintain their good stock. The decline in numbers is due to the increase of meat exports and the absence of any planned breeding policy. The consumption of both milk and meat amongst the peasants is extremely low.

[1] 1921: 5,700,000; 1932: 4,400,000. It is safe to assume that this downward trend continued.

241 654 Alongside this organisation the State ran certain technical services for agriculture, distribution of tested seeds, control of weights and measures, provision of bull and stallion services from its own stud farms. This work, however, remained less developed than in other S.E. European countries.

8. Agricultural Exports

241 231 439 Rumania was the largest grain exporter in Europe. By value, grain accounted for over half the total of agricultural exports. Livestock products, mainly live pigs and cattle, amounted to approximately one-fifth of the total, the remainder consisting of peas, beans, oilseeds, oil and oilcake, eggs and small quantities of fruit. Quantities exported on the average in the years 1935 to 1938 are shown below:—

*Exports of Principal Agricultural Commodities**
Average 1935-38
('000 *metric tons*)

Wheat	686
Maize	543
Barley	297
Peas	21
Beans	43
Oilseeds	108
Vegetable oils	5
Oilcake	103
Cattle ('000 head)	48
Pigs ('000 head)	222
Eggs	10

* Pre-1930 frontiers.

241 439 It is of interest to note that, despite German hopes of a development in oilseed cultivation and exports, no increase had been achieved up to the eve of the war. German interest had succeeded in stimulating production and exports of soya beans, but there was no expansion in total oilseed exports owing to a decline in rape seed and to an increase in domestic consumption of oil.

German purchases of Rumanian agricultural exports were increasing in recent pre-war years. In 1939 the territories of Greater Germany took 25 per cent. of the wheat exports, half the feed grain and the bulk of the oilseeds. Italy also took appreciable quantities of grain.

9. Food Consumption

146 262 The Rumanian diet is perhaps the worst-balanced in south-east Europe. The outstanding feature is its high dependence on grain, which provides three-quarters of the calories and 70 per cent. of the protein. In the towns white wheat bread is eaten except by the very poor, whilst in the country wholemeal bread or maize is usual. Over large areas, particularly in the Old Kingdom, maize forms the chief food. (Taking the country as a whole maize consumption is two-thirds higher than wheat.) During the summer months, when work is very heavy, peasant families may eat as much as 3 kg. (6½ lb.) a head daily, almost always in the form of *mămăligă* (a kind of porridge).

The rest of the rural dietary consists chiefly of beans, some potatoes (especially in Transylvania), cabbage, beetroots, carrots, onions and a certain amount of cheese and milk. Consumption of all these foods is much too low by nutritional standards. Meat is rarely eaten, except at Christmas time when a pig is killed—for the rest of the year small amounts of fat salted pork are used, more or less as a flavouring. Some fish is eaten in villages near rivers. Vegetable oils—mainly sunflower—and pig fats are used for cooking; butter is rarely eaten.

146 Largely because of its cost, the consumption of
262 sugar is very low, except among the well-to-do in the towns. (To encourage sugar-beet growing a high price was set by the Government.)

[785] The diet is further impoverished by the long religious fasts—seven weeks before Easter, six weeks before Christmas, two shorter summer periods, plus Wednesdays and Fridays of each week. The diet during the fast includes practically no food of animal origin. Children under 10 years do not normally observe these fasts and, in fact, usually have a better diet during these periods since more milk, eggs and butter are available for them.

The diet, though fairly adequate in energy value, is short of animal protein, fats and calcium; moreover, where maize is the principal cereal lack of vitamin B_2 may be very serious. Various symptoms of vitamin and mineral deficiencies are [165] observed, and the high infant-mortality rate—the highest in Europe—is also partly due to malnutrition. One of the most serious effects of the poor diet is the nervous disease pellagra, caused by this deficiency of the vitamin B_2 factor. In Moldavia, where maize is the staple food, about 5 per cent. [164] of the rural population suffers from pellagra every spring. In the whole country about 3,000 deaths occur each year from this disease (compared with 4,000 in the maize-eating southern states of U.S.A.).

The average annual pre-war food consumption of Rumania is shown in the following table, with comparative figures for the United Kingdom.

Average per Head Consumption

	Rumania		*United Kingdom*	
	Kg.	*Lb.*	*Kg.*	*Lb.*
Wheat and rye	104	229	129	285
Maize	166	365	—	—
Potatoes	50	110	84	185
Sugar	5	11	43	95
Meat	17	37	63	139
Milk	70	123*	94	165*
Butter	1	2	11	24
Pig fat	4	10	5	11
Vegetable oil	1·5	3	—	—
Margarine	—	—	4	10
Calories per day	2,700		3,100	

*Pints

B. WAR-TIME CHANGES

1. Territorial Changes

728 The net effect of the territorial changes which
241 have occurred since 1939 is the loss of Northern
311 Transylvania to Hungary and of Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. For two seasons' crops, 1940 and 1941, Rumania was without Bessarabia, but in the late summer of 1941 she not only regained Bessarabia but acquired administrative control of the Soviet territory now styled Transnistria, and this has made small contributions to the food supplies of Rumania in 1942-43. Ignoring Transnistria, however, Rumania lost 12 per cent. of her former arable area and grain production. The Transylvanian areas ceded to Hungary, though not rich agriculturally, probably needed only small imports of grain to supplement their own production, while south Dobruja, though a surplus producing area, contributed only a fraction to Rumania's total agricultural production. The country's potential agricultural export remains, therefore, substantially what it was before the war.

2. Agriculture in War Years

241 Germany, at the outbreak of the war, looked to
722 the Danube countries, and to Rumania in particu-

[9a]

241 very largely on the acquisition of tractors and other equipment. Only Germany can provide these requisites and it is of interest that, despite the poor contribution Rumania has hitherto made to Germany's food supplies, the latter has gone some way to assist the attempted reform. Over 4,000 [439] tractors with their ploughs and a variety of other implements have been imported from Germany during the war years. Tractor numbers in Rumania have probably been more than doubled by these imports, but they still represent only the beginnings of mechanisation. They have doubtless been supplied, despite insistent demands for tractors in Germany and elsewhere, in the belief that, if properly applied, they may make some slight increase in available surpluses. Some of these may have been destined for Transnistria to make good the Russian scorching.

6. Food Conditions

511 Food conditions have varied according to local resources, and in the months following the poor crops of 1942, according to the success of local prefects and officials in securing supplementary quantities from the more favoured areas. The [162] greater part of the population is rural, and most families feed themselves with their own home-grown produce. In the earlier years of the war these were able to maintain their consumption standards, but in 1942-43 there must have been a more serious degree of shortage and privation than is usual even after short crops. In the towns there has been a severe curtailment of food supplies, mitigated in individual cases by access to the Black Market.

262 Urban shortages developed early in 1941 and 434 official rationing cards were introduced in May of 511 that year in Bucarest and brought into use soon after. Sugar and meat were the first commodities to be rationed. The original sugar ration was 375 grammes (13 oz.) per week, but since May 1943 it has been only 125 grammes (4½ oz.). Meat, originally 250 grammes (9 oz.), is still (July 1943) at this level, though for a short time at the end of 1942 it was higher owing probably to the abnormal slaughterings caused by fodder shortages in 1942. Bread was first officially rationed in January 1942, but was preceded by baking regulations requiring maize admixtures in the loaf. The ration of 300

[11a]

262 434 511 grammes (10½ oz.) daily was available on five days of the week only; on the other two days maize meal only (for *mămăliga*) could be bought. The bread ration was reduced to 250 grammes in June 1942 and maize meal itself was rationed in August. The number of breadless days has varied, while barley, flour or potatoes have at times been offered in place of maize-meal. The bread mixture has also included varying proportions of maize, barley, potato and other flours. The allowance in June 1943 was 450 grammes of bread on five days and 1 000 grammes (35 oz.) of maize flour or potato flour on each of the remaining two days. All these quantities apply to Bucarest only. Other towns show variants of these regulations, depending on local supplies.

234 435 511 The most serious shortage in Bucarest and possibly in other towns appears to be milk. Owing to the depletion of surrounding herds following the high cost and scarcity of fodder only a small part of the former supply now arrives. Some milk, as with all products, is diverted to the Black Market, and official mistakes in price policy at various times have caused temporary shuts or stoppages in food supplies. Other livestock products and edible oil are also chronically short in the towns.

7. Food Prices

435 565 511 In spite of official attempts to protect consumers from increases, retail prices and the cost of living have risen almost to the same extent as producers' and wholesale prices. Taking autumn 1936 as 100, the cost of living was 330 and the cost of food 350 in the spring of 1943. These increases have been severely felt by the working and lower-middle classes. Official measures were taken to alleviate the situation of civil servants by the setting up of stores and canteens with reduced prices, some of the goods being supplied from Transnistria. Likewise firms with over 50 employees were ordered to supply them with essential foodstuffs at low prices. Persons with more ample resources make use of the Black Market on which all the ordinary foodstuffs are obtainable usually at only two to three times the official prices, the moderate character of these illegal prices being itself another illustration of the large quantities available through these channels, due to the laxity of control.